26th Annual
Russell H. Perry
Free Enterprise Award Dinner
honors Bob Buford

From left to right: Charlie Frazier (dinner chair), Bob Buford (honoree), Boone Powell (honorary dinner chair), and Ron Harris (dinner emcee).
Dallas Baptist University honored Bob Buford as the recipient of the 2013 Russell H. Perry Free Enterprise Award during the annual award dinner held on Monday, November 25, at the Anatole Hotel in Dallas. More than 1,200 individuals filled the Chantilly Ballroom for the gala dinner, which raised scholarship funds for DBU students.

Buford, known nation-wide for his book, *Halftime*, has impacted thousands of individuals and business leaders who seek to make their lives count for lasting Kingdom causes.

Until the sale of his company in July 1999, he served as chairman of the board and CEO of Buford Television, Inc., a family-owned business that started with a single ABC affiliate in Tyler, Texas, and grew to a network of cable systems across the country. In 1984, he began the Leadership Network to serve as a resource broker that supplies information to and connects leaders of innovative churches.

Several years later, in 1995, he wrote *Halftime*, a book that came from his heart and mind on how to find meaning and fulfillment in the second half of life. After the success of his book, Buford began the Halftime ministry, an organization dedicated to helping individuals enter the second half of their lives focused on joy, impact, and balance by converting their faith into action and effective results.

During the ceremony, retired US Navy Rear Admiral Ed Allen, a longtime friend of Bob Buford, made a presentation to Buford of a mounted catapult mechanism that is used to catapult fighter jets from aircraft carriers into the sky. The presentation represented Buford’s contribution to propelling others into God’s work, as Allen explained that Buford served as “a catapult for the Kingdom resulting in lives well lived.”

Having flown in countless missions and experienced more than 1,200 catapult launches off 10 different aircraft carriers, Admiral Allen explained, “The one catapult that I have been given from Bob Buford is more significant than all of the other catapults put together. Bob, I salute you, and I thank you, sir.”

Among the many tributes to Buford’s life, Steve Stroope, lead pastor at Lake Pointe Church in Rockwall, described his unique leadership ability, saying, “Bob looks out into the distance to see what can be, but more than even being a visionary, he also has the tenacity and he has the skill and ability to make that vision become a reality.”

In accepting the Russell Perry Award, Buford reminded the audience of the foundational verse for his Halftime ministry, Ephesians 2:10. Christians, he suggested, often focus on verses 8 and 9, which describe the basis of faith—the gift of God received by grace through faith—but they forget the reason why they are saved: to do good works which God prepared in advance for those who believe. Through his work with Halftime and Leadership Network, he seeks to encourage church and business leaders to discover the good works which God has for them to do and then accomplish them for the glory of God.
Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott was the keynote speaker for the Russell Perry Dinner. Abbott has served as the Attorney General for the State of Texas for three consecutive terms since his election in 2002. Prior to that, he was appointed to the Texas Supreme Court by then-Governor George W. Bush, and remained on the court until he became Attorney General. He also served as a State District Judge in Harris County.

A native of Duncanville, Attorney General Abbott literally grew up in the shadows of DBU and remarked how impressed he has been with the growth of the school and its reputation throughout the state of Texas.

Speaking about the leadership of Dr. Gary Cook, DBU president for 25 years, Abbott stated, "What I admire most about Dr. Cook is that he has inspired thousands of men and women to do more than just learn in the classroom, but to also be developed spiritually and to also follow his example of perseverance and prayer and overcoming life’s challenges."

During his speech, Abbott reflected on many of his personal heroes who have been involved with the Russell Perry Award through the years, including past recipients Bo Pilgrim, Ken Cooper, Ebby Halliday Acers, and Tom Landry. He also reflected on the courage that it takes for individuals to strive to follow God’s call in our lives to make the world a better place for generations to come. Here are some excerpts from his speech:

...God acts through all of us, whether it be through sports or business or healthcare or even in public life. We all have those opportunities when we have that intersection of working in parallel with what God is calling us for.

This heritage traces to our country’s very beginnings. In 1789, a Thanksgiving proclamation was issued by President George Washington, and as we celebrate this Thanksgiving 224 years later, his words still resonate profoundly. He wrote, “Americans must acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, obey His will, and be grateful for His benefits that include the tranquility, the union, and the plenty we have; the civil and religious liberty with which we have been blessed; and the means we have of acquiring and diffusing knowledge.”

Since that time, no country in this world, and no state in this country, has been blessed as much as the United States of America or the great state of Texas, and no state has benefited as much from the free enterprise system as the state of Texas....

...As Americans and as Texans, we are truly blessed. But it is not the riches of our land, it is not the fertile soil beneath us, or even the oil and gas beneath that soil that makes Texas great. Instead, it is our people—people who don’t look for government to solve all of the problems in their lives, but instead, they look to themselves, to their families, to their communities, and to their faith.

As I have traveled Texas as your Attorney General, I’ve seen neighbors helping neighbors respond to tragedies like the explosion that happened in West, Texas; to things like what is going on in Dallas County right now where there are efforts underway to reclaim crime-ridden inner-city enclaves, and rebuilding families that are torn apart by pain. That is the spirit of America, and that is the spirit in this room tonight. In America, we serve each other. We celebrate community service and the fruits of the American free enterprise system.

The truth of the matter is each of us has our own gifts from God. Each person, regardless of the talent that has been given by God, has our own unique role to play using the benefits that God has given us. If you go back to earlier in the presentation tonight and you can recall the first film that we saw on the screen, it made reference to Jeremiah where it said, “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “and then it goes on to say, “plans to prosper you, and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

By accepting this embrace from God, and by accepting the opportunity that is given to each of us in our daily lives, we are heeding God’s call to make a difference in this world. You all are doing just that.

So in this season of Thanksgiving, I pray that all of us are blessed with the wisdom to recognize the opportunities that we have to answer God’s call and the courage to respond to those opportunities as faithful stewards of the gifts that God has granted.

May God bless you all this Thanksgiving, may God reside in your lives and be fruitful, and may God continue to bless the great state of Texas.
Dallas Baptist University named Bob Buford as the recipient of the 2013 Russell H. Perry Free Enterprise Award during the annual dinner held on November 25 at the Hilton Anatole Hotel in Dallas. Boone Powell, retired president of Baylor Health Care System, served as the honorary chair for the dinner, and Charlie Frazier, DBU trustee and Partner, Alexander Dubose & Townsend LLP, served as the dinner chair. Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott was the keynote speaker for the evening.

Ron Harris, senior vice president for Strategic Partnerships for National Religious Broadcasters, a DBU trustee, and a DBU adjunct professor of communication, was the evening’s emcee.

Established in 1988, the 26th annual gala event strives to recognize and honor Texas leaders who use their God-given talents and abilities to make the most of opportunities created for them by the free enterprise system. The event is named in memory of Dallas leader and philanthropist Mr. Russell H. Perry, whose life of service to Dallas impacted the lives of many. Mrs. Russell H. (Phoebe) Perry continues to remain a friend of Dallas Baptist University. She and her late husband began their support of DBU in the 1960s.

Since its inception, the dinner has raised more than $4 million in scholarship funds for over 1,800 students. As emcee, Harris began the program by thanking those in attendance for their support of DBU, specifically on behalf of the students who are directly impacted by the scholarship funds raised through this event.

Dr. Kenneth Cooper, founder and chairman of Cooper Aerobics, led the Pledge of Allegiance. It was followed by the DBU Grand Chorus leading the National Anthem with DBU student Summer Coleman as the featured soloist. The Grand Chorus was under the direction of Dr. Stephen Holcomb, director of choral activities and professor of music, for the evening. Scott Turner, Texas State Representative for the 33rd District, then offered the invocation. Dinner music was provided by Sue Mitz, longtime DBU professor of...
music.

Dr. Gary Cook, DBU president, shared a word of gratitude for those in attendance. He also thanked the night’s honoree, Bob Buford, and explained how he and so many around the world have been touched and impacted by his ministry and his many books.

Following Dr. Cook’s remarks, the DBU Grand Chorus performed a patriotic medley entitled “Freedom!” conducted by Dr. Holcomb.

After the keynote speaker, Cheryl Hall, a columnist for The Dallas Morning News, introduced a special video presentation about Bob Buford from friends and colleagues who offered their praise and congratulations to Mr. Buford for being honored. The Dallas Morning News continues to serve as a sponsoring partner of the dinner. Following the video, Boone Powell took the stage to introduce Rear Admiral Ed Allen, who made a special presentation to Bob Buford, and then Mr. Powell welcomed Mr. Buford to the stage to receive the Russell Perry Award.

The closing benediction was led by Dr. Robert Jeffress, senior pastor of First Baptist Church Dallas and father of DBU alumna Julia Jeffress Sadler.

Mrs. Alicia Landry, wife of the late Tom Landry, and Herschel Forester, former DBU trustee.

Dr. Gary Cook (center right), president of DBU, along with his wife, Sheila, and their two sons, David (left) and Mark (right). Dr. Cook recently celebrated 25 years as president of DBU.

DBU supporters Jack and Meredith Woodworth (right), along with their daughter Molly and her husband, Will Folse, both DBU alumni.

Former honoree Ebby Halliday Acers (center), along with Betty Turner and DBU graduate student Stephen Phillips.

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2012 Vester Hughes
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2010 Wright L. Lassiter, Jr.
2009 Tom Leppert
2008 Drayton McLane, Jr.
2007 Andy and Joan Horner
2006 David A. Dean
2005 Pete Schenkel
2004 Noble Hurley (posthumously)
2003 The Weir Furniture Family
2002 George A. Shafer
2001 Mary C. Crowley (posthumously)
2000 Erle Nye
1999 Ross Perot, Jr.
1998 Jim L. Turner
1997 Rodger Meier
1996 W. Forrest Smith
1995 Lonnie “Bo” Pilgrim
1994 Bob Minyard, Liz Minyard, Gretchen Minyard Williams, Sonny Williams
1993 Boone Powell, Sr.; Boone Powell, Jr.
1992 Dr. Kenneth H. Cooper
1991 Tom Landry
1990 Maurice & Ebby Halliday Acers
1989 Trammell Crow
1988 John M. Stemmons, Sr.

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Cheryl Hall, columnist for The Dallas Morning News, introduced the video tribute to Bob Buford.

DBU Alumni Wayne and Kara Hamilton. Wayne Hamilton is the former head of the Texas Republican Party and current campaign manager for Greg Abbott’s gubernatorial run.

Past Russell Perry Awardees, Gretchen Minyard Williams and J.L. Sonny Williams. Sonny Williams is a DBU alumnus and has served as a past member of the DBU board of trustees.

DBU alumnus Seth Roberts and his wife, Amy. Seth is a member of the DBU board of trustees and was recently named a partner with Locke Lord, and Amy is a partner with Jackson Walker.